

What is claimed is:

1. A method for allowing a user to access newsgroup listings via an interactive television application that is implemented using user television equipment having a display on which content is displayed, comprising:

allowing the user to issue a command associated with viewing the newsgroup listings; and

displaying the newsgroup listings on the display upon the user issuing the command, wherein all of the newsgroup listings that are displayed are related to subject matters of the content displayed on the display by the interactive television application.

2. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the newsgroup listings include at least one Usenet group listing.

3. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the newsgroup listings include at least one proprietary newsgroup listing.

4. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the newsgroup listings include at least one third-party newsgroup listing.

5. The method defined in claim 1, further comprising simultaneously displaying the content on the display.

6. The method defined in claim 1, wherein issuing a command is comprised of pressing a button on a remote control.

009290-8850960

7. The method defined in claim 1, wherein
~~issuing a command is comprised of selecting a~~
selectable element from the display.

8. The method defined in claim 1, further
comprising:

allowing the user to select one of the
newsgroup listings; and

displaying newsgroup message listings
associated with the selected newsgroup listing on the
display.

9. The method defined in claim 8, further
comprising displaying only new newsgroup message
listings.

10. The method defined in claim 8, further
comprising displaying all available newsgroup message
listings.

11. The method defined in claim 8, further
comprising:

allowing the user to select one of the
newsgroup message listings; and

displaying a newsgroup message
associated with the selected newsgroup message listing
on the display.

12. The method defined in claim 11, further
comprising:

allowing the user to access at least one
attachment associated with the displayed newsgroup
message;

activating an application associated
with the attachment; and

009290" 00950960

using the application to display the
content of the attachment.

13. The method defined in claim 1, further comprising simultaneously displaying an interactive advertisement on the display.

14. The method defined in claim 1, further comprising:

displaying program listings as the content; and

displaying the newsgroup listings on the display upon the user issuing the command, wherein all of the newsgroup listings that are displayed are related to the subject matter of a single program listing from the displayed program listings.

15. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the interactive television application is an interactive television program guide.

16. A method for using an interactive television application to notify a user at user television equipment of new newsgroup messages posted to a particular newsgroup on a newsgroup server, comprising:

allowing the user to activate a notification feature for the particular newsgroup from the user television equipment; and

notifying the user once a new newsgroup message is posted in the particular newsgroup on the newsgroup server.

009290-89950960
09605683-062600

17. The method defined in claim 16, wherein ~~the user is notified through the use of an e-mail~~ message sent to the user.

18. The method defined in claim 17, wherein the e-mail message is comprised of the new newsgroup message of which the user is being notified.

19. The method defined in claim 17, wherein the e-mail message is comprised of a link to the new newsgroup message of which the user is being notified.

20. The method defined in claim 16, wherein notifying the user comprises using an interactive television program guide to notify the user.

21. The method defined in claim 16, wherein notifying the user comprises using an interactive television program guide implemented on user television equipment having a set-top box.

22. The method defined in claim 16, wherein activating the notification feature is comprised of allowing the user to select a selectable element on a display.

23. The method defined in claim 22, wherein the selectable element is a checkbox.

24. The method defined in claim 16, wherein the user is notified through the use of a pop-up overlay that is displayed to the user on a display.

009290" 08950960
09605683 062600

25. The method defined in claim 16, further comprising allowing the user to turn off the notification feature.

26. The method defined in claim 25, wherein the user turns off the notification feature by selecting a checkbox on the display.

27. A method for providing moderated newsgroup messages to a user of an interactive television application at user television equipment, comprising:

using an automatic filter to moderate the newsgroup messages;

allowing the user to use the interactive television application to access the newsgroup messages; and

displaying moderated newsgroup messages to the user.

28. The method defined in claim 27, further comprising using a human moderator to moderate the newsgroup message.

29. The method defined in claim 27, wherein the moderating is performed at a main facility.

30. The method defined in claim 27, wherein the moderating is performed at a television distribution facility.

31. The method defined in claim 27, wherein the moderating is performed at a location other than at a main facility or television distribution facility.

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09605683 062600

32. The method defined in claim 27, wherein the moderating is comprised of removing predefined words from the newsgroup messages in accordance with a predefined rating for the newsgroup associated with each respective newsgroup message.

33. The method defined in claim 27, wherein the moderating is comprised of removing predefined words from the newsgroup messages.

34. The method defined in claim 27, further comprising:

allowing the user to use the interactive television program guide to select at least one newsgroup to block from being accessed; and

blocking access to the selected newsgroups.

35. The method defined in claim 34, further comprising displaying a message to a user who attempts to access any of the selected newsgroups informing the user that the newsgroup is blocked from access.

36. The method defined in claim 34, wherein there are a plurality of users, further comprising:

allowing one of the users to set an access code;

allowing any of the users to attempt to access the selected newsgroups;

asking the user attempting to access any of the selected newsgroups to enter the access code; and

giving the user attempting to access any of the selected newsgroups access to the selected newsgroups once the user enters the access code.

009290-062600

37. The method defined in claim 34, wherein the interactive television application is an interactive television program guide.

38. A method for using an interactive television program guide to allow a user to access information from within a newsgroup message, comprising:

displaying to the user the newsgroup message, wherein the newsgroup message contains a link to the information;

allowing the user to select the link in the newsgroup message;

accessing the information associated with the selected link using the interactive television program guide; and

displaying the information to the user on a display.

39. The method defined in claim 38, further comprising displaying the link in the form of text, wherein the link is displayed differently from other text in the newsgroup message.

40. The method defined in claim 38, further comprising displaying the link as an icon.

41. The method defined in claim 38, wherein the information is displayed in the form of a web page.

42. The method defined in claim 38, wherein the information is displayed in the form of a video.

009290-062600

43. The method defined in claim 38, wherein the information is displayed in the form of a program listing.

44. The method defined in claim 38, wherein the newsgroup message has more than one link, further comprising:

displaying a highlight region within the newsgroup message;

allowing the user to navigate the highlight region among the links in the newsgroup message; and

allowing the user to select a link in the newsgroup message by allowing the user to issue a selection command when the highlight region is over the link the user wishes to select in the newsgroup message.

45. A method for parsing information provided by an interactive television program guide for a particular subject matter and providing cross-reference data to a user on user television equipment having a display, comprising:

searching through the information provided by the interactive television program guide and noting information that is associated with the particular subject matter;

updating a cross-reference database for the particular subject matter based on the search performed on the information provided by the interactive television program guide;

accessing the cross-reference database and retrieving the cross-reference data, wherein the cross-reference data is associated with the particular subject matter, and wherein the subject matter is

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associated with content currently being displayed on the display; and

displaying a list of cross-references to the user, wherein the list of cross-references is gathered from the cross-reference data, and wherein the list of cross-references includes at least one newsgroup listing.

46. The method defined in claim 45, wherein the list of cross-references includes at least one program listing.

47. The method defined in claim 45, wherein the list of cross-references includes at least one web page link.

48. The method defined in claim 45, further comprising:

allowing the user to select a cross-reference listing from the list of cross-references;
accessing the information associated with the cross-reference listing using the interactive television program guide; and
displaying the information to the user on the display.

49. The method defined in claim 45, further comprising simultaneously displaying the list of cross-references with content currently being displayed on the display.

50. The method defined in claim 49, further comprising displaying the list of cross-references in a cross-reference region.

009290" 062600

51. The method defined in claim 45, wherein the cross-reference database is stored at a main facility.

52. The method defined in claim 45, wherein the cross-reference database is stored at a television distribution facility.

53. A method for displaying interactive television program guide content to a user on user television equipment having a display, comprising:

displaying television programming in a reduced sized video window in a first section of the display; and

simultaneously displaying newsgroup content in a second section of the display, wherein the subject matter of the newsgroup content is related to the subject matter of the television programming.

54. The method defined in claim 53, further comprising simultaneously displaying an interactive advertisement in a third section of the display.

55. The method defined in claim 53, wherein the newsgroup content includes newsgroup listings.

56. The method defined in claim 53, wherein the newsgroup content includes newsgroup message listings.

57. The method defined in claim 53, wherein the newsgroup content includes newsgroup messages.

09605683-062600

58. The method defined in claim 53, further comprising ~~simultaneously displaying other content in a~~ third section of the display.

59. The method defined in claim 53, further comprising:

simultaneously displaying other content in a third section of the display; and

simultaneously displaying newsgroup content in the second section of the display, wherein the subject matter of the newsgroup content is related to the subject matter of the television programming and the other content.

60. The method defined in claim 59, wherein the other content is comprised of text.

61. The method defined in claim 59, wherein the other content is comprised of graphics.

62. The method defined in claim 59, wherein the other content is comprised of video.

63. A method for providing a user with the ability to act on a referenced television program in a newsgroup message using an interactive television program guide implemented using user television equipment having a display, comprising:

displaying the newsgroup message to the user on the display, wherein the newsgroup message is comprised of at least one element associated with the referenced television program;

allowing the user to select the element associated with the referenced television program; and

009290-00950960

providing the user with an opportunity to perform at least one of the following functions on the referenced television program: set a reminder, schedule a recording, and view a listing of newsgroups related to the referenced television program.

64. The method defined in claim 63, further comprising providing the user with an opportunity to tune to the referenced television program.

65. The method defined in claim 63, further comprising displaying information about the referenced television program.

66. The method defined in claim 65, wherein the information about the referenced television program includes the local time the referenced television program will be available and the channel on which the referenced television program will be available.

67. The method defined in claim 63, wherein the element is comprised of text.

68. The method defined in claim 63, wherein the element is an icon.

69. The method defined in claim 63, further comprising:

- displaying a highlight region;
- allowing the user to navigate the highlight region onto the element; and
- allowing the user to select the element when the highlight region is on the element.

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70. A method for allowing a user to write a newsgroup message using an interactive television

application on user television equipment, comprising:

allowing the user to enter text which represents the newsgroup message using the interactive television application, wherein the text is comprised of markup language code that is used to create enhanced features within the newsgroup message; and

processing the markup language code and displaying the newsgroup message to another user accessing the newsgroup message, wherein the newsgroup message is displayed with the enhanced features the markup language code represents.

71. The method defined in claim 70, wherein the markup language code is hypertext markup language code.

72. The method defined in claim 70, wherein the user enters text using an on-screen keyboard.

73. The method defined in claim 70, wherein the user enters text using a wireless keyboard.

74. The method defined in claim 70, wherein the enhanced features include displaying text in a different font style.

75. The method defined in claim 70, wherein the enhanced features include providing links to content external to the newsgroup message.

76. The method defined in claim 75, wherein the content is a television program.

09605663-062600

77. The method defined in claim 70, wherein the interactive television application is an interactive television program guide.

78. A method for allowing a user to write a newsgroup message using an interactive television application on user television equipment having a display, comprising:

allowing the user to select options and enter information when writing the newsgroup message, wherein the options and information are associated with enhanced features to be embedded in the newsgroup message;

automatically generating markup language code associated with the options selected and information entered by the user; and

processing the markup language code and displaying the newsgroup message to another user accessing the newsgroup message, wherein the newsgroup message is displayed with the enhanced features the markup language code represents.

79. The method defined in claim 78, wherein the markup language code is hypertext markup language code.

80. The method defined in claim 78, wherein the user enters text using an on-screen keyboard.

81. The method defined in claim 78, wherein the user enters text using a wireless keyboard.

82. The method defined in claim 78, wherein the enhanced features include displaying text in a different font style.

009290" 8895960
09605683 062600

83. The method defined in claim 78, wherein the enhanced features include providing links to content external to the newsgroup message.

84. The method defined in claim 83, wherein the content is a television program.

85. The method defined in claim 78, wherein the enhanced features include displaying graphics in the newsgroup message.

86. The method defined in claim 78, wherein the enhanced features include attaching a file to the newsgroup message.

87. The method defined in claim 78, wherein the enhanced features include inserting an applet in the newsgroup message.

88. The method defined in claim 78, further comprising displaying the automatically generated markup language code on the display.

89. The method defined in claim 78, wherein the options are provided in the form of selectable icons on the display.

90. The method defined in claim 78, wherein the options are provided in the form of menu listings on the display.

91. The method defined in claim 78, further comprising:

009290-062600

providing a newsgroup text region on the display in which content of the newsgroup message is displayed; and

automatically displaying the markup language code generated by the interactive television application in the newsgroup text region.

92. The method defined in claim 91, further comprising allowing the user to edit the text contained in the newsgroup text region.

93. The method defined in claim 78, wherein the interactive television application is an interactive television program guide.

94. A system for allowing a user to access newsgroup listings via an interactive television application that is implemented using user television equipment having a display on which content is displayed, comprising equipment configured to:

allowing the user to issue a command associated with viewing the newsgroup listings; and

displaying the newsgroup listings on the display upon the user issuing the command, wherein all of the newsgroup listings that are displayed are related to the subject matters of the content displayed on the display by the interactive television application.

95. The system defined in claim 94, wherein the newsgroup listings include at least one Usenet group listing.

009290-062600

96. The system defined in claim 94, wherein the newsgroup listings include at least one proprietary newsgroup listing.

97. The system defined in claim 94, wherein the newsgroup listings include at least one third-party newsgroup listing.

98. The system defined in claim 94, further comprising equipment configured to simultaneously display the content on the display.

99. The system defined in claim 94, wherein issuing a command is comprised of pressing a button on a remote control.

100. The system defined in claim 94, wherein issuing a command is comprised of selecting a selectable element from the display.

101. The system defined in claim 94, further comprising equipment configured to:

allow the user to select one of the newsgroup listings; and

display newsgroup message listings associated with the selected newsgroup listing on the display.

102. The system defined in claim 101, further comprising equipment configured to display only new newsgroup message listings.

103. The system defined in claim 101, further comprising equipment configured to display all available newsgroup message listings.

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104. The system defined in claim 101, further comprising equipment configured to:

allow the user to select one of the newsgroup message listings; and

display a newsgroup message associated with the selected newsgroup message listing on the display.

105. The system defined in claim 104, further comprising equipment configured to:

allow the user to access at least one attachment associated with the displayed newsgroup message;

activate an application associated with the attachment; and

use the application to display the content of the attachment.

106. The system defined in claim 94, further comprising equipment configured to simultaneously display an interactive advertisement on the display.

107. The system defined in claim 94, further comprising equipment configured to:

display program listings as the content; and

display the newsgroup listings on the display upon the user issuing the command, wherein all of the newsgroup listings that are displayed are related to the subject matter of a single program listing from the displayed program listings.

108. The system defined in claim 94, wherein the interactive television application is an interactive television program guide.

009290-062600

109. A system for using an interactive television application to notify a user at user television equipment of new newsgroup messages posted to a particular newsgroup on a newsgroup server, comprising equipment configured to:

allow the user to activate a notification feature for the particular newsgroup from the user television equipment; and

notify the user once a new newsgroup message is posted in the particular newsgroup on the newsgroup server.

110. The system defined in claim 109, wherein the user is notified through the use of an e-mail message sent to the user.

111. The system defined in claim 110, wherein the e-mail message is comprised of the new newsgroup message of which the user is being notified.

112. The system defined in claim 110, wherein the e-mail message is comprised of a link to the new newsgroup message of which the user is being notified.

113. The system defined in claim 109, wherein notifying the user comprises using an interactive television program guide to notify the user.

114. The system defined in claim 109, wherein notifying the user comprises using an interactive television program guide implemented on user television equipment having a set-top box.

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115. The system defined in claim 109, wherein activating the notification feature is comprised of allowing the user to select a selectable element on a display.

116. The system defined in claim 115, wherein the selectable element is a checkbox.

117. The system defined in claim 109, wherein the user is notified through the use of a pop-up overlay that is displayed to the user on a display.

118. The system defined in claim 109, further comprising equipment configured to allow the user to turn off the notification feature.

119. The system defined in claim 118, wherein the user turns off the notification feature by selecting a checkbox on the display.

120. A system for providing moderated newsgroup messages to a user of an interactive television application at user television equipment, comprising equipment configured to:

use an automatic filter to moderate the newsgroup messages;

allow the user to use the interactive television application to access the newsgroup messages; and

display the newsgroup messages to the user after having been moderated by the automatic filter.

009290-08950960

121. The system defined in claim 120, further comprising equipment configured to use a human moderator to moderate the newsgroup message.

122. The system defined in claim 120, wherein the moderating is performed at a main facility.

123. The system defined in claim 120, wherein the moderating is performed at a television distribution facility.

124. The system defined in claim 120, wherein the moderating is performed at a location other than at a main facility or television distribution facility.

125. The system defined in claim 120, wherein the moderating is comprised of removing predefined words from the newsgroup messages in accordance with a predefined rating for the newsgroup associated with each respective newsgroup message.

126. The system defined in claim 120, wherein the moderating is comprised of removing predefined words from the newsgroup messages.

127. The system defined in claim 120, further comprising equipment configured to:

allow the user to use the interactive television program guide to select at least one newsgroup to block from being accessed; and
block access to the selected newsgroups.

128. The system defined in claim 127, further comprising equipment configured to display a message to a user who attempts to access any of the selected

009290-062600

newsgroups informing the user that the newsgroup is
~~blocked from access.~~

129. The system defined in claim 127, wherein there are a plurality of users, further comprising equipment configured to:

allow one of the users to set an access code;

allow any of the users to attempt to access the selected newsgroups;

ask the user attempting to access any of the selected newsgroups to enter the access code; and

give the user attempting to access any of the selected newsgroups access to the selected newsgroups once the user enters the access code.

130. The system defined in claim 127, wherein the interactive television application is an interactive television program guide.

131. A system for using an interactive television program guide to allow a user to access information from within a newsgroup message, comprising equipment configured to:

display to the user the newsgroup message, wherein the newsgroup message contains a link to the information;

allow the user to select the link in the newsgroup message;

access the information associated with the selected link using the interactive television program guide; and

display the information to the user on a display.

009290-00950960

132. The system defined in claim 131, further comprising equipment configured to display the link in the form of text, wherein the link is displayed differently from other text in the newsgroup message.

133. The system defined in claim 131, further comprising equipment configured to display the link as an icon.

134. The system defined in claim 131, wherein the information is displayed in the form of a web page.

135. The system defined in claim 131, wherein the information is displayed in the form of a video.

136. The system defined in claim 131, wherein the information is displayed in the form of a program listing.

137. The system defined in claim 131, wherein the newsgroup message has more than one link, further comprising equipment configured to:

display a highlight region within the newsgroup message;

allow the user to navigate the highlight region among the links in the newsgroup message; and

allow the user to select a link in the newsgroup message by allowing the user to issue a selection command when the highlight region is over the link the user wishes to select in the newsgroup message.

138. A system for parsing information provided by an interactive television program guide for a particular subject matter and providing cross-

009290-082600

reference data to a user on user television equipment having a display, comprising equipment configured to:

search through the information provided by the interactive television program guide and noting information that is associated with the particular subject matter;

update a cross-reference database for the particular subject matter based on the search performed on the information provided by the interactive television program guide;

access the cross-reference database and retrieving the cross-reference data, wherein the cross-reference data is associated with the particular subject matter, and wherein the subject matter is associated with content currently being displayed on the display; and

display a list of cross-references to the user, wherein the list of cross-references is gathered from the cross-reference data, and wherein the list of cross-references includes at least one newsgroup listing.

139. The system defined in claim 138, wherein the list of cross-references includes at least one program listing.

140. The system defined in claim 138, wherein the list of cross-references includes at least one web page link.

141. The system defined in claim 138, further comprising equipment configured to:

allow the user to select a cross-reference listing from the list of cross-references;

009290-062600

access the information associated with
the cross-reference listing using the interactive
television program guide; and

display the information to the user on
the display.

142. The system defined in claim 138, further
comprising equipment configured to simultaneously
display the list of cross-references with content
currently being displayed on the display.

143. The system defined in claim 142, further
comprising equipment configured to display the list of
cross-references in a cross-reference region.

144. The system defined in claim 138, wherein
the cross-reference database is stored at a main
facility.

145. The system defined in claim 138, wherein
the cross-reference database is stored at a television
distribution facility.

146. A system for displaying interactive
television program guide content to a user on user
television equipment having a display, comprising
equipment configured to:

display television programming in a
reduced sized video window in a first section of the
display; and

simultaneously display newsgroup content
in a second section of the display, wherein the subject
matter of the newsgroup content is related to the
subject matter of the television programming.

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147. The system defined in claim 146, further comprising equipment configured to simultaneously display an interactive advertisement in a third section of the display.

148. The system defined in claim 146, wherein the newsgroup content includes newsgroup listings.

149. The system defined in claim 146, wherein the newsgroup content includes newsgroup message listings.

150. The system defined in claim 146, wherein the newsgroup content includes newsgroup messages.

151. The system defined in claim 146, further comprising equipment configured to simultaneously display other content in a third section of the display.

152. The system defined in claim 146, further comprising equipment configured to:

simultaneously display other content in a third section of the display; and

simultaneously display newsgroup content in the second section of the display, wherein the subject matter of the newsgroup content is related to the subject matter of the television programming and the other content.

153. The system defined in claim 152, wherein the other content is comprised of text.

154. The system defined in claim 152, wherein the other content is comprised of graphics.

009290" 08950960

155. The system defined in claim 152, wherein
~~the other content is comprised of video.~~

156. A system for providing a user with the ability to act on a referenced television program in a newsgroup message using an interactive television program guide implemented using user television equipment having a display, comprising equipment configured to:

display the newsgroup message to the user on the display, wherein the newsgroup message is comprised of at least one element associated with the referenced television program;

allow the user to select the element associated with the referenced television program; and

provide the user with an opportunity to perform at least one of the following functions on the referenced television program: set a reminder, schedule a recording, and view a listing of newsgroups related to the referenced television program.

157. The system defined in claim 156, further comprising equipment configured to providing the user with an opportunity to tune to the referenced television program.

158. The system defined in claim 156, further comprising equipment configured to display information about the referenced television program.

159. The system defined in claim 158, wherein the information about the referenced television program includes the local time the referenced television program will be available and the channel on which the referenced television program will be available.

009290" 062600

160. The system defined in claim 156, wherein
~~the element is comprised of text.~~

161. The system defined in claim 156, wherein
the element is an icon.

162. The system defined in claim 156, further
comprising equipment configured to:

display a highlight region;

allow the user to navigate the highlight
region onto the element; and

allow the user to select the element
when the highlight region is on the element.

163. A system for allowing a user to write a
newsgroup message using an interactive television
application on user television equipment, comprising
equipment configured to:

allow the user to enter text which
represents the newsgroup message using the interactive
television application, wherein the text is comprised
of markup language code that is used to create enhanced
features within the newsgroup message; and

process the markup language code and
displaying the newsgroup message to another user
accessing the newsgroup message, wherein the newsgroup
message is displayed with the enhanced features the
markup language code represents.

164. The system defined in claim 163, wherein
the markup language code is hypertext markup language
code.

165. The system defined in claim 163, wherein
the user enters text using an on-screen keyboard.

009290-062600

166. The system defined in claim 163, wherein
the user enters text using a wireless keyboard.

167. The system defined in claim 163, wherein
the enhanced features include displaying text in a
different font style.

168. The system defined in claim 163, wherein
the enhanced features include providing links to
content external to the newsgroup message.

169. The system defined in claim 168, wherein
the content is a television program.

170. The system defined in claim 163, wherein
the interactive television application is an
interactive television program guide.

171. A system for allowing a user to write a
newsgroup message using an interactive television
application on user television equipment having a
display, comprising equipment configured to:

allow the user to select options and
enter information when writing the newsgroup message,
wherein the options and information are associated with
enhanced features to be embedded in the newsgroup
message;

automatically generate markup language
code associated with the options selected and
information entered by the user; and

process the markup language code and
displaying the newsgroup message to another user
accessing the newsgroup message, wherein the newsgroup
message is displayed with the enhanced features the
markup language code represents.

009290" 062600

172. The system defined in claim 171, wherein
~~the markup language code is hypertext markup language~~
code.

173. The system defined in claim 171, wherein
the user enters text using an on-screen keyboard.

174. The system defined in claim 171, wherein
the user enters text using a wireless keyboard.

175. The system defined in claim 171, wherein
the enhanced features include displaying text in a
different font style.

176. The system defined in claim 171, wherein
the enhanced features include providing links to
content external to the newsgroup message.

177. The system defined in claim 176, wherein
the content is a television program.

178. The system defined in claim 171, wherein
the enhanced features include displaying graphics in
the newsgroup message.

179. The system defined in claim 171, wherein
the enhanced features include attaching a file to the
newsgroup message.

180. The system defined in claim 171, wherein
the enhanced features include inserting an applet in
the newsgroup message.

181. The system defined in claim 171, further
comprising equipment configured to display the

009290" 69950960

automatically generated markup language code on the display.

182. The system defined in claim 171, wherein the options are provided in the form of selectable icons on the display.

183. The system defined in claim 171, wherein the options are provided in the form of menu listings on the display.

184. The system defined in claim 171, further comprising equipment configured to:

provide a newsgroup text region on the display in which content of the newsgroup message is displayed; and

automatically display the markup language code generated by the interactive television application in the newsgroup text region.

185. The system defined in claim 184, further comprising equipment configured to allow the user to edit the text contained in the newsgroup text region.

186. The system defined in claim 171, wherein the interactive television application is an interactive television program guide.

009290-08950960